तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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Enthusiasm

His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

What we actually accomplish by our work is not as important as the eagerness to serve Krishna that is behind our working for him. I can see that you are very, very eager and enthusiastic to serve Krishna to your best capacity — that is your great asset. As long you are so much eager to serve Krishna, without any doubt you will very quickly meet Krishna face to face. Thank you for helping me in this way.

— Letter to Hariprasad Das. 9 January 1973.

Obtaining Auspiciousness For Those Who Don't Have Sadhu-sanga

A letter from Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

śrī śrī guru-gaurāṇgo jayataḥ
[All glories to Sri Guru and Gauranga]

Sri Chaitanya Matha, Sri Mayapur, 22 December 1927

Yesterday I received a letter from you. Many days prior to this I received another letter from you before I went to the western states of India. Because I was travelling to different places I could not reply to you timely. From the Gaudiya magazine or from the devotees you may have heard about the festivals we held in the western states. Everywhere, good people are becoming joyful just by hearing the glories of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Sri Nabadwip is the most worshipable place for the devotees. Any place in this *dhāma* awakens remembrance of the Lord. Therefore I desire to stay for a few more days. For the purpose of serving Lord Hari I go to Calcutta and different places. Because Sriman Mahaprabhu is supremely merciful, he arranged for many devotees even in a place like Calcutta. In the Gaudiya Math, *hari-kathā* is always going on and everyone is completely absorbed in *hari-sevā*. I wish to have their association in my last days, just as Pariksit Maharaja was absorbed in hearing *Bhāgavata*. In my last days, even if I am surrounded by relatives and well wishers in a comfortable situation, if there is no *hari-kathā* there, I consider such a place and such association to be unnecessary. I see that by the mercy of Bhagavan the inclination of service to the Lord is present in all of the *maṭhs*, thus I'm meditating upon Mahaprabhu's munificence. Where I was previously spending my life in luxurious

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enjoyment of material objects, instead of that association today I am traveling to different places serving the Lord and associating with the devotees of the Lord. If we can spend our last days in this way then we will not lead miserable lives in forgetfulness of Hari.

You are not hearing enough *hari-kathā* from devotees of Hari, who are always eagerly engaged in serving the Lord. Because of that, you have not had the good fortune of being engaged every moment in service to the Lord. However, your propensity for serving the Lord is keeping you far away from others' association. Always study Gaudiya literature and literature written by devotees. Doing so you will get the same benefit of hearing *hari-kathā* from a devotee's mouth.

Although in this material world we are not meeting many devotees who are from the spiritual world, still, even today the discussions and pastimes of the devotees from the time of Sriman Mahaprabhu are eternally present in the form of literature and sound. Therefore we don't feel any material distress. If we live here according to the principles of the spiritual world, then that consciousness will keep us separate from material miseries.

Wherever you may be, *bhāgavata-kathā* will not leave you. Even in the midst of all kind of mundane talks you will be able to remember the Lord and the words of his devotees. If God desires, then the opportunity will again arise for you to return back to this place. At that time you will again get the opportunity to hear *hari-kathā*. For his own pleasure, God puts his devotees into a particular situation. By accepting that situation one will forget their miseries.

Common people in material society are not able to understand topics of the Lord, topics of Sriman Mahaprabhu, and the transcendental characteristics of devotees. If the propensity to serve the Lord appears in one's heart then in all circumstances one can remember Lord Hari.

You are always trying to make spiritual advancement. Therefore, in the form of literature God is enlightening you from within all about his *kathā*. It is written in *Caitanya Bhāgavata*:

> *yata dekha vaiṣṇavera vyavahāra-duḥkha*
> *niścaya jāniha sei parānanda sukha*

> When you see a *vaiṣṇava* who seems to be suffering material misery, you should know that he is actually experiencing the highest ecstasy. [*madhya* 9.240]

To test us, God is always residing within everything. If we can come to the realization of observing the presence of God everywhere then our self-conception becomes less.

> *adyāpi sei līlā kare gaura-rāya*
> *kona kona bhāgyavān dekhibāre pāya*

> Even today, Lord Gaura Ray is enacting his pastimes, but only fortunate souls are able to see them." [Seems to be adapted from *Cb. madhya* 10.283]

When will that fortunate day arise when all of us pursue the essence of Sri Gaurasundar's teachings and thus actually traverse on the path of *bhakti*?

This world of birth and death is the place where the Lord tests everyone. To pass this test one should hear *kīrtana* from the dear devotees of Lord Hari. You are hearing the same from the mouth of literature, so you should not feel that you are lacking anything.

Once, Hiranyakasipu decided that there is no God in this world. Trying to prove his point, he put forward many arguments to Prahlad Maharaja. However, Lord Nrisimhadev appeared from a pillar and made everything auspicious for Hiranyakasipu and the whole world. Devotees of the Lord see the Lord everywhere, but those who are envious of the Lord cannot even realize that he exists.

We are situated in the middle ground [being neither pure devotees nor materialists], and are showing our taste for serving Lord Hari. However, the next moment we are busy trying to enjoy sense gratification. By the desire to serve Hari we become detached from sense enjoyment. Materialistic life is the cause of immediate happiness and distress, while eternal devotional service to the Lord brings the Lord pleasure. For that satisfaction of the Lord we are always engaged in devotional service.

I don't know if you will get immediate benefit by reading this long letter. My use of language is extremely incompetent. I am unable to convince everyone and explain every topic. For that reason, many times I maintain silence.

All of the arrangements for the upcoming festivals have been made here at the Chaitanya Math. The accommodations are ready at Sriman Mahaprabhu's house [the *yoga-pīṭha* temple in Mayapur where Chaitanya Mahaprabhu appeared], between Gaura-kund and the lion gate.

nitya-aśīrvādak — your ever wellwisher,
Sri Siddhanta Saraswati

— Translated by Sri Madhavendu Das and Sri Bhakta Pradosh, from *Prabhupādera Patrāvali, prathama-khanda*. Sri Chaitanya Math. Mayapur. 1991. Bengali. Pages 43-46.

The Native Place of Thakur Bhaktivinode

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Today is the holy appearance day of Saccidananda Bhaktivinode Thakur. He is a great *vaiṣṇava ācārya* in the line of *gauḍīya vaiṣṇava paramparā* and is known as the Seventh Goswami. In *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, Bhaktivinode Thakur has described what is the best type of welfare work, *para-upakāra*. He says that there are three types of *dayā*, mercy. Showing mercy to this gross body is also one type of doing good, known as *sat-karma*, or *puṇya-karma*. To feed the hungry, to make arrangements for the medical treatment of patients, to give water to thirsty persons, to give warm clothing to someone suffering from cold — all these are types of mercy pertaining to the gross material body.

Others open schools and colleges and make arrangements for free education. That is showing mercy to the mind. But the topmost activity is showing mercy to the soul. Those who are engaged in preaching the science of Krishna consciousness to others and speaking about the science of devotional service, they are doing the topmost humanitarian work for others whereby they will be freed from material sufferings and develop complete Krishna consciousness. Developing pure devotion, they will be freed from material bondage and at last go back home, back to Godhead, never to return again in this material world to suffer.

Those *vaiṣṇava*s who have dedicated their life to preaching the science of Krishna consciousness are doing the best type of good. Those who are following the *karma-kāṇḍa* section of the Vedas don't do such good. They may be engaged in doing something beneficial for the gross body or the mind, but pure devotees, who are only engaged in preaching the science of Krishna consciousness, are doing the topmost good. This is what Bhaktivinode Thakur has said.

How many can understand Bhaktivinode Thakur's words? And who is following them? Only *vaiṣṇavas*, *mahājanas*, they know, they understand, and they are engaged in such activities.

How many persons are glorifying such *vaiṣṇava*s in this material world? *vaiṣṇavera kriyā, mudrā vijñeha nā bujhaya* [adapted from *Cc. madhya* 23.39] — even a *vijñā*, a very wise and learned person, cannot understand the activities of *vaiṣṇavas*. Those who are engaged in doing some good to the body or mind are glorified in this human society. But how many are glorifying those who are engaged in doing good to the soul? How many are recognizing them? How many know about the soul? How many see the soul? How many have developed the vision to see the soul? Very, very few.

Bhaktivinode Thakur's previous name was Kedaranath Dutta. He was born on 2 September 1838 in the village Ula, in Nadia district, West Bengal. However, that was his maternal uncle's house, not his paternal house. His paternal house was in Orissa. So he belongs to Orissa. [According to the tradition in India, the village where one's paternal ancestors resided is considered to be one's native place.]

The name of his father was Ananda Chandra Dutta. The name of his grandfather was Raja Vallabha Dutta. The name of his mother was Jagat Mohini. The name of the father of Jagat Mohini was Ishwara Chandra Mustafi.

So Bhaktivinode's paternal house was in Orissa. At that time it was in the district of Cuttack. Now it is in the district of Kendrapara, near the river Birupa, and the name of the village is Choti Mangalpur. This is Bhaktivinode Thakur's *śrīpāta*.

Last year on the 155th appearance day of Bhaktivinode Thakur some of our devotees went to this village. One assembly was held there, organized by Dr. Fakir Mohan Das, a research scholar. He was a professor at Utkal University. He is writing a book that is soon to be published about Bhaktivinode Thakur and is bringing out some undiscovered facts.

On this day last year the Kendrapara Law College installed a picture of Bhaktivinoda Thakur at their school, because he was the first law graduate of Orissa. He was also a magistrate. Today in both Chotigram and at the Law College in Kendrapara there will be some meetings for the glorification of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur. I hope that those who are engaged in doing this activity will get the mercy of Bhaktivinode Thakur and achieve all perfection. ❀

— Lecture in Bhubaneswar on 17 September 1994

The Glories of Sri Gurudeva

Vaishnava Das

Vaishnava Das lived in the early 1700s and hailed from the village known as Tena Vaidyapur, a few

miles north of Katwa in West Bengal. He is the author of many devotional poems and the compiler of the famous encyclopedic anthology of gauḍīya vaiṣṇava songs known as Pada-kalpa-taru.

jaya jaya śrī-guru prema kalpa taru
adbhūta yāṅhāra prakāśa
hiyā ageyāna- timira baḍa jñāna
sucandra kiraṇe karu-nāśa

All glories, all glories to *śrī guru*, the desire tree of *prema*, whose manifestation is most wonderful! He cleanses ignorance and darkness from the heart by the moonshine of his wisdom.

iha locana ānanda dhāma
ayācita ei' hena patita heri yo pahuṅ
yāci deoyala hari-nāma

In this world he gave the vision of Krishna's abode, and unsolicited gave the holy name to the most fallen.

duramati agati satata asata mati
nāhi sukṛti lava-leśa
madhu-rasa vṛndāvana- yugala bhajana dhana
mohe karala upadeśa

I am wicked and am aimlessly wasting my life, constantly absorbed in temporary illusions. I do not have even a tinge of piety. Nevertheless, gurudeva has instructed me about the sweet mellow of Vrindavan and the wealth of *yugala bhajana*, glorification of the divine couple.

niramala gaura- prema-rasa siñcane
pūrala saba mana-āśa
so caraṇāmbūje rati nāhi haoyal
royata vaiṣṇava dāsa

He sprinkled all with the nectar of pure *gaura-prema-rasa* and thus fulfilled everyone's desires. Vaishnava Das cries that he could not attain attachment for his lotus feet. ❀

— Translated by Bhakta Pradosh from *Vaiṣṇava Gītikā*, edited by Bhajahari Das. Published by the Nitai Gaura Giridhari Mandir. Radha Kund. 1998. Page 1.

Don't Criticize Guru

Sātvata Tantra *4.49-53*

sarva-bhakti-vyatikaraḥ sva-guror vāg anādaraḥ
dveṣeṇa nārakaṁ yāti kurvan bhaktim api dvija

One who out of hatred acts contrary to all the rules of devotional service, disrespecting the words of guru, goes to hell, in spite of performing *bhakti*.

doṣa-dṛṣṭyā doṣavān syāt tatra doṣa-phalaṁ bhavet
martya-dṛṣṭyā kṛtaṁ sarvaṁ bhavet kuñjara-śauca-vat

One who sees a fault is possessed of that same fault and will suffer the result of that fault. All the endeavors of one who sees their guru as an ordinary person become fruitless like the bathing of an elephant.

sarva-sādhana-mukhyā hi guru-sevā sadādṛtā
yayā bhaktir bhagavati hy añjasā syāt sukhāvahā

Of all the activities of *sādhana*, the most important is service to the guru. By that service, devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead is quickly, easily, and happily attained.

tasmāt sarva-prayatnena guror vāg-ādareṇa vai
kāryā saiva tu tat sarvā bhagavad-bhakti-vardhinī

One should therefore very carefully respect the guru's words. They increase one's devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

yeṣāṁ gurau ca japye ca viṣṇau ca paramātmani
nāsti bhaktiḥ sadā teṣāṁ vacanaṁ parivarjayet

One should always reject the words of those who have no devotion for their guru, for sacred mantras, for Lord Vishnu, or for the all-pervading Supersoul. ❀

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